



MEETING MINUTES / 16 JULY 2020

****MEETING WAS CONDUCTED VIA ZOOM DUE TO COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS****

ATTENDANCE:

Present: Showell, Stewart, Baldwin, Bradley, Farley, Lardizzone, Lopez, Magner, Miller, Sarg, Seppala

Excused: McMullen, Phillips, Sutton

Guests: Courtney Stewart (Deputy Secretary of State), Vince Kane (Wilmington VAMC), Ginny Yelland (Wilmington VAMC), Jacob Dillon (Wilmington VAMC), Tina Foskey (Delaware Veterans Home), Pat Cerchio (First State Women Warriors), Dave Skocik (Veterans Coalition)

CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS:

Acknowledged new commissioners: William Miller (American Legion), Paul Phillips (Veterans of Foreign Wars), and Gregory Sutton (At Large)

Moment of silence

Service Members safety as they serve abroad

Reflected on service with the commission, appreciated working with commissioners and guests, proud to represent National Guard, and Reserves

Looking forward to more commission outreach and expansion of current era veterans

Excited about having new commissioners on board

MEETING MINUTES:

Prior minutes were motioned to approve (with correction) by Sarg, seconded by Sarg

ADMINISTRATIVE REMARKS:

Wilmington VAMC – Vince Kane, Director

The pandemic remains active in Delaware and national communities

Facilities are focused on safety full screenings are required before medical facility entry

Staff members are wearing masks, handwashing, and practicing social distancing

Asking veterans to remain home if they are symptomatic and we will engage via virtual care

All clinics are fully operational, open five days a week

- Trying to maximize virtual, call before coming in person

Limiting visitors, escorts are asked to wait in a designated location, no one under age 18 is authorized in the facility

- If an escort is needed, it needs to be known ahead of time to provide protective equipment

Do not delay essential care use 1 (800) 461 8262 to schedule appointments

Asking laboratory and radiology to be appointed, no walk-ins

Parking garage is under way, shuttling staff from remote site, and limited parking is for veterans

- Has a tram car to transport visitors from parking spot to the facility

- Garage to be completed by spring of 2021

Renovating benefits building to provide new spacing

Dover clinic is moving forward, Senator Carper visited the site, anticipate mid-fall opening following testing of equipment

Public Affairs Officer Dillon mentioned virtual town halls scheduled during this week, will share the flyer

(Sarg) How are the suicide prevention and community mental health programs going?

We are going to feature the programs in our town halls

Seeking to add some positions to help our mental health providers have greater engagement with healthcare systems in Delaware/New Jersey

Challenges with mental health are getting outpatient beds but working with local partners and Coatesville VA (mental health)

Have struggled getting assistance through residential programs due to closing or limited resources for receiving veterans

Countering by utilizing virtual and telehealth platforms, if someone needs to come in safety precautions are used to deliver care

Want to have discussions with the state regarding aging of veterans with mental health concerns and their declining cognitive abilities

- Seeking treatment and long-care options for this population

Mental health summit will be held in September and it will be virtual

Homeless teams continue to address this population's needs and healthcare

Delaware Veterans Home (DVH) – Tina Foskey, Director:

Not present

Home of the Brave, Director Jessica Finan:

Not present

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Dave Skocik, Veterans Coalition

Continuing to think about virtual events to recognize and fundraise for veterans

Pat Cerchio, First State Women Warriors

Has organizational flags for the Bear Veterans Cemetery

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Bear Veterans Memorial Cemetery, Commissioner Magner:

Interments – 65 (+8)

Millsboro Veterans Memorial Cemetery, Commissioner Bradley:

Interments – 29 (+7)

Health and Human Services, Commissioner Sarg:

Sat on brain injury and equal opportunity councils, via Zoom, during restrictions

- Brain injury's budget was re-approved but leftover state monies were transferred to the general fund to assist with the pandemic

Provided copies of grant and aide legislation (SB 260 Grant and Aide) discussed total bill

- Mentioned discrepancy in monies provided toward veteran organizations

- Needs to be brought to our legislative leader's attention

Legislative Affairs, Commissioner McMullen:

(Sarg) Has not received commissioner inputs for 2021 legislative recommendations, needed by 1 August

HB 265, 100% service-connected property/school tax exemption, is in appropriations

- Will be re-introduced in 2021

(Baldwin) Expressed frustration in the bill not being forwarded, bill must be re-introduced, has several legislators in support

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS:

DVTF Previous Month: Applications 8; Granted 7 (87.5%); Awarded \$8,150.30; Balance - \$100,000.00

ORGANIZATIONAL REPORTS:

Nothing to report

Commissioner Miller (American Legion - AL)

Nothing to report

Commissioner Bradley (American Veterans - AMVETS)

Post 2 is trying to reopen, limited funds due to limited activities

Those monies are needed to assist veterans

Commissioner Lardizzone (Disabled American Veterans - DAV)

Attended New York DAV convention

Service officers processed 51 claims

Vacant (Korean War Veterans)

Nothing to report

Commissioner Farley (Marine Corps League - MCL)

Limited departmental business and only by telephone

Commissioner Sarg (Military Officers Association of America - MOAA)

No June or July meetings

Completed seven leadership medals to JROTC programs in Kent and New Castle counties

National COVID relief fund awarded a grant to a veteran in need

Commissioner Magner (Military Order of the Purple Heart - MOPH)

Finished a virtual departmental convention

Manages weekly Zoom meetings with veterans, with posttraumatic stress, to check-in

Commissioner Phillips (Veterans of Foreign Wars - VFW)

Nothing to report

Commissioner Baldwin (Vietnam Veterans of America – VVA)

Delaware Military Academy's graduation was successful

Will email veteran organization to provide positive feedback to the Delaware Veterans Home

- Continuous care for veterans

- Zero COVID cases

Be on the lookout for home warranty scams involving veterans

Commissioner Showell (At Large, affiliated with Delaware National Guard)
Nothing additional to report

Commissioner Seppala (At Large, affiliated with Military Order of World Wars)
No MOWW meetings
Delaware Military Museum committee met 13 July to work on World War II exhibits

Commissioner Sutton (At Large)
Nothing to report

Commissioner Lopez (At Large, affiliated with Delaware Veterans)
DELVETS Post 2 is open and trying to maintain
Provided four \$1000.00 scholarships
Holding executive meetings monthly
Maintaining contact with previous clients (wounded warriors)
Military Women's Tea will occur in March
Stand Down will occur 23 April, 40 organizations are registered, next meeting is 24 September

Commissioner Stewart (At Large, affiliated with student veterans' associations)
Last meeting, enjoyed working with the commission and guests, very gratifying

TERM COMPLETION:

Baldwin – 9 September 2020
McMullen – 9 September 2020
Showell – 9 September 2020
New appointments will be available soon

EVENTS:

To be determined

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

NEW BUSINESS:

ITEMS FOR THE GOOD AND WELFARE OF THE ORGANIZATION:

CLOSED SESSION:

Election for chair and vice chair positions
Baldwin was the only candidate for the chair position, votes were forwarded to Stewart and Baldwin was elected chair by a majority
Lopez was the only candidate for the vice chair position, votes were forwarded to Stewart and Lopez was elected vice chair by a majority

SPECIAL SESSION:

NEXT MEETING:

Tuesday, 18 August 2020 at 1000

LOCATION:

Delaware Commission of Veterans Affairs